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C O N F I D E N T I A L MANAMA 000392

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STATE FOR NEA/ARPI, S/WCI

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TAGS: [PTER](#) [KAWC](#) [PINR](#) [PREL](#) [BA](#)

SUBJECT: BAHRAIN: INTERAGENCY BRIEFING TEAM ON GUANTANAMO ISSUES

REF: STATE 45507

Classified by Ambassador William T. Monroe for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

1. (C) Post welcomes DOD's offer to lead an interagency team to discuss the status of the six Bahraini detainees at Guantanamo (reftel). Senior government officials regularly raise the detainees in meetings with the Ambassador and EmbOffs, most recently today, March 16, and the press covers the issue from many perspectives - actions of the families, the GOB, the USG, Bahraini human rights activists, American lawyers, and related legal developments in the American court system or at GTMO. The March 16 Bahrain Tribune ran a banner headline article saying that Bahraini detainees at GTMO could be released soon following "great advances" in GOB negotiations with U.S. authorities, according to Ministry of Interior Acting Chief of Legal Affairs Col. Mohammed Rashid Buhumood. Bahrain's newspapers prominently covered a March 11 New York Times article claiming that the Pentagon seeks to transfer more than half of the detainees to the custody of foreign governments. In addition, the Gulf Daily News ran a four-part series March 12-15 on alleged mistreatment of Bahraini detainee Juma Al Dossary and Abdulla Majid Al Nuaimi. According to the articles, the source of the information was the American lawyer representing the Bahraini detainees, Dorsey and Whitney attorney Joshua Colangelo-Bryan, who visited GTMO in October 2004 and plans to visit again shortly.

2. (C) The interagency team should be prepared to brief the GOB in some detail about the charges against the detainees and specific conditions for their release or transfer to a detention facility in Bahrain. If they will remain at GTMO, the team should explain the reasons. The visit could raise GOB expectations of negotiations for the return of the detainees to Bahrain, particularly in light of the New York Times article, and we would have to manage these expectations carefully. In this context, a presentation that is limited to the Combatant Status Review Tribunal or Administrative Review Board processes risks being counterproductive and could expose senior Bahraini officials to further public criticism. We would approve a visit designed to address the future of Bahraini detainees at GTMO, whether they will be released, under what conditions, and if not, then why not.

3. (C) In response to reftel question, post would want the interagency team to interact with GOB officials only. There would be no upside for the USG from meeting with parliamentarians or journalists. The GOB would want to calibrate how and when to report any positive movement on the status of the detainees to parliament and the local press to demonstrate it is doing all it can on behalf of its citizens.

MONROE